

LARs keep Bagram running smoothly

Story by Sgt. Greg Heath
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – Whenever a unit runs into a mechanical or electrical problem it can't fix, they go to a Direct Support Unit (DSU), which can usually find a remedy to the problem. Sometimes things have to go a notch higher and that's where the Army Materiel Command comes in.

Within the AMC there are several different subordinate commands to handle the multitude of equipment within the Army's arsenal, but the main ones here on Bagram are Tank and Armament Command (TACOM), Communications and Electronics Command (CECOM), and Aviation and Missile Command (AMCOM).

Each subordinate command has Department of the Army civilians called Logistic Assistance Representatives (LAR), which are highly specialized technicians whose main purpose is to help the coalition forces tackle nearly any problem they may come across when dealing with equipment.

"We're here to provide technical and lo-



Courtesy photo

Logistics Assistance Representative Bob Foley, TACOM, observes the overhaul of an M-249 Squad Automatic Weapon (SAW).

gistical assistance when (units) hit a brick wall," said Richard Maattala, logistical assistance representative out of TACOM, whose main expertise is working with automotive machinery ranging from forklifts and Humvees to large mine clearing equipment used by Army engi-

neers. "We're here to support the soldiers. We can either get you an answer or get you a part, that's the bottom line."

The LARs from the different commands

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CA soldiers provide home for displaced Iraqis

Story by Spc. Ryan Smith
372nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD, Iraq – In a dusty corner of east Baghdad, there is a community of families living in an old Iraqi military complex. The buildings in the compound are less like family housing and more like warehouses and offices. Since coalition forces entered the city, soldiers have found that there are thousands of squatters living in abandoned government buildings.

However, the people living at this compound have been encouraged to move there — many

have already been evicted from schools, fire departments, police stations and other government facilities that are now needed by the new Iraqi government.

The compound, named Hillsdale by U.S. soldiers, after Maj. Scott Hill, commander of Detachment A, 411th Civil Affairs Battalion, an Army Reserve unit from Danbury, Conn., is a temporary home for displaced Iraqis.

While Iraqis living there have been invited to stay, it's not a free ride. The residents of Hillsdale are allowed to live there only on a temporary basis.

Soldiers from the 411th first found this site at the end of April 2003. Spc. Frank O'Farrell, civil

affairs specialist with the battalion, is one of the soldiers who helped organize the community at Hillsdale, located near the civil military operations center (CMOC) that the 411th operates behind the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad.

"When we first got there, we found more unexploded ordnance than I've ever seen in one place," he said. "There were piles of C4 (explosives), dynamite, grenades, mortars, land mines, artillery shells, .50-caliber machine guns, and thousands of rounds of anti-aircraft ammunition."

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



One analyst believes attacks in Iraq are backed or funded by Islamic extremists.

Iraq possible 'magnet' for al Qaeda says analysts

WASHINGTON – Iraq is becoming a major “magnet” for al Qaeda terrorists, who now pose more of a threat than remnants of Saddam Hussein’s Baath Party, two analysts said Tuesday after a truck bomb killed 17 at the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad.

“A half-dozen U.S. officials who investigate or analyze al Qaeda ... say that Iraq has become an important battleground for al Qaeda in the past several months,” *CNN* terrorism analyst Peter Bergen said.

“The officials use words such as ‘magnet’ and ‘super magnet’ to describe the attraction that Iraq has for al Qaeda and other ‘jihadists,’” Bergen said.

James Rubin, a former U.S. deputy secretary of state, agreed that the terrorism milieu in Iraq has changed, pointing to increased attacks against civilian targets and fewer large-scale attacks against U.S. soldiers.

“It is my suspicion that the types of attacks in Iraq are either backed or funded by Islamic extremists.”

They are coming from other countries and “see it as a rich place to conduct their bloody business,” he said.

“Let’s face it, if you are a terrorist in the Middle East and you have a mission to kill Americans, Iraq is now the place you’re going to want to go,” said Rubin, speaking from London, England.

“We have had an attack on the Jordanian Embassy and attacks on water supplies and power supplies, [and] now the attacks on the U.N., which hark back very much to the attempt of the al Qaeda organization to blow up the U.N. headquarters in New York,”

said Rubin, who was the State Department’s top spokesman during part of the Clinton administration



Former top Iraqi Vice President Ramadan shown in a file photo.

Former Iraqi vice president held by U.S. military, officials say

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Iraq’s former vice president Taha Yasin Ramadan is being held in U.S. custody, U.S. military and Kurdish officials told *CNN* on Tuesday.

Ramadan was the senior of two vice presidents in Saddam Hussein’s regime and had been with Saddam Hussein since the start of the toppled Iraqi leader’s rise to power.

The former vice president is an ethnic Kurd who is believed to have coordinated the brutal suppression of 1991’s Shia rebellion in southern Iraq. He is No. 20 on the U.S. military’s list of 55 most-wanted members of the Saddam regime. He is pictured on the 10 of diamonds in a special deck of cards distributed to U.S. forces in Iraq.

Officials with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) said their forces had captured Ramadan in the northern city of Mosul and handed him over to the U.S. military on Monday, but U.S. Central Command spokesman Col. Ray Shephard in Tampa, Florida, said those details were still being checked.

In Washington, Pentagon sources told *CNN* that Ramadan had been “handed over” to U.S. forces.

President Bush said he was pleased at the news. “Slowly but surely, we’ll find who we need to find,” Bush told reporters near his ranch in Crawford, Texas.

Ramadan is the 36th former Iraqi official on the most wanted list to be captured. Two

others are dead, two are suspected as possibly dead and one is listed as “status unknown.”

West Nile vaccine shows promise in monkeys

WASHINGTON – A vaccine that combines key parts of two viruses has been shown to protect monkeys from West Nile virus, a mosquito-borne illness that has killed 10 Americans this year.

Scientists at the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, or NIAID, one of the National Institutes of Health, made the vaccine by placing West Nile virus proteins into a modified virus that causes dengue fever. This created a live but weakened virus.

When injected into monkeys, the hybrid virus protected the animals from injected doses of West Nile virus.

The researchers said the combined viruses crippled the West Nile virus but still caused a strong immune response against it.

In a laboratory test, the researchers injected 12 monkeys with the combined virus vaccine and injected eight other monkeys with either the West Nile virus or the dengue virus.

Six weeks later, all 20 monkeys were injected with West Nile virus. The dozen that received the combined virus vaccine developed antibodies that successfully protected the animals from the West Nile virus.

Human clinical trials with the vaccine are to begin this year, said Dr. Brian Murphy, a researcher in NIAID’s Laboratory of Infectious Diseases.

“We’re optimistic that our engineered virus vaccine will provide long-term immunity to West Nile virus, but the human clinical trials will give us the definitive data,” Murphy said in a statement.

West Nile is spread to people through the bite of an infected mosquito.

Usually the disease produces only flu-like symptoms, but some patients develop an inflammation of the brain that can be lethal. The disease is most severe among the elderly.

ANA continues to build with NCO course graduation

Story by Maj. Craig Doescher
CJTF-180 Information Operations

KABUL, Afghanistan – Recently, at the Kabul Military Training Center (KMTC), 104 proud Afghan National Army noncommissioned officers graduated from the fourth ANA NCO course.

The ceremony was attended by several Afghan Ministry of Defense (MOD) and Coalition leaders who spoke of the NCOs' responsibilities to their soldiers and the ANA.

Maj. Gen. Juma Naser, of the Ministry of Defense, expressed the importance of a strong NCO Corps to the ANA saying, "In the past, NCOs were not very important, but now, rightfully so, we recognize that you are the key trainers of our soldiers." He went on to speak about upcoming historical events affecting the future of Afghanistan.

"The Constitutional Loya Jirga and next year's elections will be key developments in the reconstruction of our country. Your leadership within the ANA will greatly contribute to the success of these important events," Naser added.

Each Coalition member plays a critical part in building the ANA.

The British Army, in this instance, has the responsibility of administering NCO training.

The challenging four-week course tests the professional abilities of the NCOs in a broad range of subjects such as leadership skills, running live-fire ranges and teaching classes.

The fourth NCO class was the last group led primarily by the British. It was a commemorative event because future classes will be conducted primarily by Afghan National Army instructors.

The British Army will gradually diminishing assistance as more Afghan instructors become qualified.

The British Army, in turn, will now focus on administering a more senior-level NCO Course.

An important part of the ceremony was the presentation of hard-earned awards; the highlight being that of Sgt. Del Agha, a 23 year-old Pashtun from Kapisa Province, receiving the best student award. Agha serves as an example of the multi-ethnic diversity of the newly created ANA.

After the conclusion of the ceremony, Agha shared his views by expressing his appreciation for the excellent instruction he received from the British.

Agha said he now has the confidence to go out and teach tactics and weapons training to his soldiers; however, this will have to wait, since he has been chosen to be an instructor in the next NCO course.

LARS, from Page 1

work on equipment ranging from communication switches, which link Bagram to all the other bases throughout Afghanistan, small arms, all types and sizes of generators, any kinds of vehicle and all Army aviation vehicles and equipment.

A majority of the LARS are retired soldiers who were Army mechanics or technicians who now work full time at active-duty Army posts throughout the United States.

The DA civilian technicians combine usually more than 20 years of Army experience with additional training to become experts in their particular fields.

They are regularly called on to take their knowledge overseas to help soldiers accomplish their missions.

"Everywhere there are soldiers on the face of this earth, there are LARs to support them," said John Loosli, logistical assistance representative out of CECOM, whose particular expertise is generator mechanics.

LARs, like many soldiers, often deploy for six-month rotations to wherever there are ongoing military operations.

Often LARS can save a unit a lot of headaches when dealing with equipment problems.

Loosli recalled a time when a unit's generator was overheating because of a broken water pump. Soldiers in the unit easily replaced the water pump but the generator continued to overheat. The soldiers proceeded to clean and tinker with various parts within the generator to no avail. Finally they took it to the DSU who was going to order a whole new engine for it at a cost of \$5,000. Luckily, before ordering the new engine, they gave Loosli a call to ask his advice. He recommended that they try turning the cooling fan around, and the problem was solved. After replacing the water pump, the soldier had mistakenly put the cooling fan on backwards, which caused the generator to overheat. In the end, not only did the unit avoid the wasted man-hours it would have taken to install the new engine, but they also saved the Army from spending unnecessary dollars.

According to Maattala, LARs save the Army hundreds of millions of dollars annually through cost avoidance. Cost avoidance is basically avoiding any unnecessary spending on parts and contracted maintenance.

So far this year, Maattala said his automotive section alone has saved the Army over \$6 million.

The LARs also act as direct link between the units and the manufactures representatives of the equipment soldiers work on, which can help units get the right parts in a more timely manner, according to Sgt. 1st Class Ricky Harrison, Ground Support Equipment platoon sergeant, 3654th Maintenance Company, Iowa National Guard.

"Our mission in Afghanistan would be a lot more difficult without their assistance," Harrison added. "They're a valuable asset to me and my unit."

In addition to technical support, the LARs offer informal "sustainment" training to units who request it, according to Fred Andrews, another logistical assistance representative out of CECOM, who specializes in communication switch maintenance.

For Andrews, a former Army instructor at the Army communication school at Fort Gordon, Ga., training troops is a particularly gratifying part of the job.

"As LARs, we utilize our additional military experience to provide current military needs," Andrews said.

"We're here to provide any support we can to anyone who needs it -- bottom line, the soldier," is their mission said Andrews.

HOME, from Page 1

Explosive ordnance disposal soldiers and engineers worked around the clock to clear the area of these hazardous munitions.

At the beginning of August, the civil affairs soldiers returned to the site to assess the conditions.

O'Farrell and the other soldiers on his team asked people living there questions to determine who the heads of the families are, how many people are in each family, where they are from, why they were forced to move there, what their skills are, and whether they are currently employed.

The questionnaire is part of the displaced citizen registration that the civil affairs soldiers use to create a database to streamline the assistance they provide to Iraqis who need it.

Part of the need for registration is to eliminate corruption in the community. O'Farrell and the other soldiers have found evidence that some people are abusing the system. Some people are living there rent free, but are employed and can afford to live elsewhere.

Although these problems are not widespread in Hillsdale, it is difficult for the civil affairs team of about six soldiers to regulate a community of 700 to 900 people.

Eventually, the soldiers will turn Hillsdale over to Iraqi authorities. The families on the compound will choose representatives for a committee that will report to the local neighborhood advisory council.

"We want the Iraqis to be able to work out their problems themselves," O'Farrell said.

The committee will be able to address the community issues to civil affairs units and nongovernmental organizations council.

The problems the people living at Hillsdale face range from water and electricity outages to unemployment and getting local ration cards.

The plan for Hillsdale is organized into several projects to renovate the facilities. Developing a system for relocating displaced citizens, rather than simply evicting them to live on the streets, will prevent a humanitarian crisis, said Maj. Scott Caldwell, deputy director of civil affairs, and a member of the government support team for humanitarian assistance support, 1st Armored Division

Keeping people off the streets and allowing the new government to regain control of government buildings and facilities in Baghdad will work out in everyone's best interest, he said.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: "A Knight's Tale." A peasant squire takes up the identity of his master when the knight suffers an untimely demise.

Tomorrow's movie will be "The Last of the Mohicans."



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Thursday
Bagram:	Partly cloudy H: 97F L: 77F	Mostly clear H: 97F L: 72F
Kandahar:	Dusty H: 104F L: 77F	Dusty H: 104F L: 75F
Kabul:	Dusty H: 88F L: 64F	Dusty H: 90F L: 64F
Uzbekistan:	Clear H: 101F L: 60F	Clear H: 100F L: 62F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from *ESPN.com*)



Ohio State's Maurice Clarett will become the most recognizable Heisman contender -- if he is cleared by the NCAA and can get into football shape.

Running out of time, Clarett may miss season opener

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Even if he's eligible, Maurice Clarett might not be able to play in Ohio State's opener if he doesn't return to practice soon.

Buckeyes coach Jim Tressel said Saturday that his star running back might not be in good enough shape to play Aug. 30 against Washington. Clarett is being held out of preseason workouts while he is investigated by an Ohio State committee and the NCAA.

The 10-person university committee is looking into allegations of preferential treatment for Clarett and other athletes in the classroom, while the NCAA is investigating an exaggerated police report that Clarett gave to campus police after his car was burglarized in April.

"I would think that everyone who is going to play significantly in a ballgame like that has to be prepared physically," Tressel said. "That's why you have preseason, to get guys ready so that when they go out there healthwise it's the best thing for them. I get nervous about a lot of the guys who maybe haven't had as much work as we like."

Clarett, banned from all team activities, has been working out on his own. Tressel said it was unlikely that any player could be in game condition after spending only a handful of days working out with the team.

"It would be real hard. Real hard," he said.

Tressel said there was no substitute for contact and game

conditions.

"Football is football. Running and lifting is the closest thing we can get to it, but it's not football," he said.

Martin replaces Malone on Olympic team

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — Los Angeles Lakers' power forward Karl Malone, grief-stricken over the death of his mother, will not rejoin the U.S. Olympic qualifying team. Kenyon Martin of the New Jersey Nets was chosen Tuesday as his replacement.



Kenyon Martin

Malone called U.S. team officials Monday night and informed them of his decision. He will retain his spot on the 2004 Olympic team if the United States earns one of three berths to the Athens Games at a qualifying tournament that begins Wednesday.

Martin boarded a flight Tuesday morning to San Juan and was expected to join the team at its afternoon practice. Martin, who got married Saturday in Las Vegas, is not guaranteed a spot on the 2004 team, USA Basketball spokesman Craig Miller said.

Malone, a 40-year-old two-time Olympian, left the team's training camp in New York on Aug. 13 to return to Arkansas after his mother, Shirley Jackson Malone, died.

"We really wanted Karl to be here, but he suffered such an unbelievable loss. He is so close to his family that he just couldn't be here and it was more important for him to be with his family and we all understand that," U.S. coach Larry Brown said. "He'll be remembered here and hopefully he'll be part of our team in 2004 if we're lucky enough to qualify."

Martin becomes the third member of the New Jersey Nets on the roster, joining Jason Kidd and Richard Jefferson.

Bucs ink McFarland to extension

TAMPA, Fla. — The Tampa Bay Buccaneers took another step toward keeping the NFL's stingiest defense together Tuesday, signing nose tackle Anthony McFarland to a five-year contract extension worth \$34 million over the next six seasons.



Anthony McFarland

McFarland, who teams with All-Pro Warren Sapp to form the most dominating defensive tackle tandem in the league, also received a \$9.5 million signing bonus.

"Growing up, I thought the only way I'd see some of these numbers was through the lottery," said McFarland, who had a year left on the contract he signed as a rookie entering the NFL as the 15th overall pick in the 1999 draft. "It's a great opportunity to extend my career, and hopefully I'll finish it here."

The deal, which incorporates the \$2.25 million McFarland was to earn this season, was a top priority for general manager Rich McKay, who can now turn his attention to trying to keep Sapp in a Bucs uniform beyond 2003.

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

Afghanistan's new army opens recruiting centre

KABUL, Afghanistan (*Pak Tribune*) – Afghanistan's fledgling national army is stepping up a drive to expand its ranks, opening its first recruiting centre in the east of the country, a spokesman for the United Nations said.

The recruitment centre is to open in Jalalabad, capital of eastern Nangarhar province, when potential recruits will be able to watch videos about the army, UN spokesman David Singh said in Kabul.

"Until now, most soldiers have been recruited to the (national army) through provincial governors and commanders," Singh said. "The centres will make it easier to reach potential young recruits across the country."

Afghanistan's army now numbers just 5,000, but the government wants it to grow to 70,000 over the next several years. The new army is eventually supposed to replace tens of thousands of irregular militias that officially serve under the Defence Ministry but that are in reality loyal to local warlords who frequently fight each other.

Other recruiting centres are due to open in Gardez, Bamiyan, Kandahar, Kunduz and Kabul, Singh said. New recruits must be between the ages of 18 and 22 and physically fit, Singh said.

The centres will distribute leaflets in local languages Dari and Pashtu "encouraging people to join and explaining the benefits, including regular pay, a chance to learn a skill or trade and opportunities to travel around Afghanistan," Singh said.

All recruits will travel to a military training centre in eastern Kabul for an initial 10-week training course. Forces from France, the United States and other coalition countries serving in Afghanistan are now training troops.

The new army is also supposed to be multiethnic. Its ranks are currently dominated by Tajiks, an ethnic minority that formed the backbone of the Tajik Defence Minister Mohammed Fahim's northern alliance, which seized Kabul from the Taliban in 2001. Most of the country's ethnic groups, however, are represented.

Explosion rocks home of Hamid Karzai's brother

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (*Fox News*) — An explosion ripped through the home of the brother of President Hamid Karzai on Tuesday, causing no injuries but sending clouds of black smoke billowing from the sprawling compound in southern Afghanistan.

Police initially said the blast at Ahmed Wali Karzai's house was a bomb, but a presidential spokesman later said it was caused by the accidental detonation of explosive materials being transported at the site. The president's brother was not at home at the time.

"It wasn't a bomb that exploded in the house. Some munitions accidentally went off. It was just ... a servant who was moving small arms munitions and it suddenly for some reason exploded," spokesman Jawid Luddin told *The Associated Press*.

Kandahar is the traditional home of Karzai as well as the spiritual headquarters of the former Taliban regime ousted in the 2001 U.S.-led coalition war on terror.

Attacks by anti-government insurgents have become increasingly bold in recent days, with hundreds of rebels attacking police stations in eastern Afghanistan.

On Monday, suspected Taliban insurgents killed seven policemen in an ambush of a police vehicle south of Kabul, a regional military commander said Tuesday.

The attack took place on a valley road in Kharwar in Logar province, about 55 miles south of the capital, said Gen. Hattiquallah Luddin.

About 12 gunmen opened fire with shoulder-fired rockets and machine-guns, destroying the vehicle. Luddin blamed members of the ousted Taliban regime for the attack and said security forces swept through the area after the attack and arrested seven people.

Also Tuesday, officials said a lone gunman opened fire on a vehicle belonging to a British charity in an attack on aid workers in northern Afghanistan.

Two Afghan employees of Save the Children-UK were slightly hurt by flying glass when bullets shattered their vehicle's windows Sunday in northeastern Badkshan province, said Sue Watkins, the organization's program director.



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support